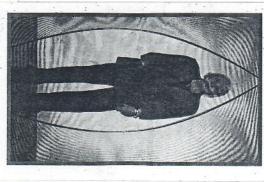
given to mainly mid-career artists who

Artist Fellowship COLA awards are

landmasses

authentic individuals who cooperated not only the enthusiasm of the strangely to use to represent itself? If so, would dictate the kind of images the city wants and wondering at the political ramificative at the ten COLA 2004 visual artists hole image was an affectionate tribute to ture make the cut? Each low-tech, pin-Jack Butler's wonderful black-and-white future art exhibitions. tions the new direction might have on its photographs of the aging hot rod subcul Will the department's new mandate leaf and organic metallic bronze tive bands of



Municipal Art Gallery. and armature, life-size, at the Los Angeles Court Series, 2004, slide projection on fabric Habib Kheradyar, Patricia Faure, from LA Art

Gallery of turbulence year's City of around this here was a lot

artists brought a quick recanting promise of preservation, it will be as a forcefully make from it. about art and what the city wants to tourism." That's a suggestively vague emphasis: "the promotion of cultural wail of protest from business as well as Cultural Affairs Department. While the direction that begs all kinds of questions limmed down department, with a new announced the termination of the entire budget deficit, the mayor unexpectedly Angeles Municipal Art 'COLA 2004' at the Los

ttempt to staunch the city's \$300 million tion. In an Affairs's exhibi-Cultural Los Angeles

that lives via cars.

If that kind of homebrewed eccentric-

the ongoing manufacture of personal America wafted off the pictures like gas terone and longings for a simpler with souped-up street cars. Time, testoslove affair Southern Californian's have capture them, but the whole nostalgic with the lengthy exposures necessary to

umes. It made for a loving critique of

dentity and mobile community in a city

Currently the \$10,000 Individual

the ominous behind a Prozac kind of used appealing pattern and color to mask detailed the dangers of urban life, but narratives in flat, stacked perspective that Ann Chamberlin were headline-inspired The sweetly colored naive paintings of tics wrapped deeply in aesthetic padding. artists tended to have their cultural polipotential visitors, it is because the COLA ity wouldn't be thought to scare off

Recchion's music environments were fas-

just what its new mandate means, I found waves, decoraing ocean enthrallingly ization scenes of curlhighly stylized her luscious, Imbedded in unbiguous langers of civipaper made the paintings on andscape ly illuminated pleasantness arge, glorious tamaguchi's

myself looking with an altered perspec-

Cultural Affairs proceeds to figure out apply for the funds for a proposed year-

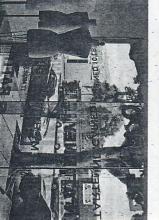
long project in their area of interest. As

shape ambient cacophony with offered the opportunity to renegotiating public space and ry installation, Disembodied Zellen's multi-wall participatoas a balm for anxiety. Jody tion. Order, however, predomwere coded private cell phone conversasnatches taken from one-sided visualized a shifting game of ment: the cell phone. She tion of the urban environinvert a distressing contamina inated and beauty was offered human ecological manipulasymbolic hints of alarming bices, also used pleasure to

if the future emphaunderstandable. But I wonder self-application process is this year, yet, without saying and of omission, given the anything new about it. That Painting dominated COLA

COLA artists were of their art felt risky but little about any esting. Don't get me sis on attracting all doing solid work wrong, this year's the city really interedge art that makes kinds of cuttingial search for the more active curatorglobe-trotting culwon't demand a tural vagabonds

present famous social-historical paintings as abstracted colorful blanks emptied of everything but architectural scale. While compositions of massive, overlapping stages, or Renée Petropoulos's mural color photographs of empty musical the improbable sounds in Tom vinyl geometric shapes that code and re-Bernard's beautiful, crystal sharp formal Certainly not Cindy



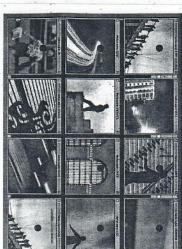
papered rooms that housed them were cinating, the black-and-gold poster-

some valuable insight into it that a cham populace of Los Angeles, they did offer present representations of the diverse emblematic of that kind of work or to portraiture in COLA this year and although they weren't selected to be There were three artists who used

> laborers were lively, intensely animated ber of commerce approach to art might thick, painted portraits of Latino day not want to consider. John Sonsini's



Tect.



arts. Only time supporting their cities spend on most other fraction of what spends only a

major U.S.

canvas, 60" x 48", at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery. gouache, 19" x 19"; Takako Yamaguchi, The So-Called Laws of Nature, 2003, oil, bronze leaf on paper, 52-1/2" x 82"; Jody Zellen, Clockwise from top left: Ann Chamberlin, Traffic, Paper Planes, 2003. Nearly Ten Months, 2003, installation; John Sonsini, Fernando, 2003, oil on www.ghostcity.com, 1997-2004, Web site; Renée Petropoulos, detail of

ity to skin color that demanded we see with remarkable personality and sensitivown first name and returned our gaze us each as an individual. quickly, from life, each was titled with his ignored or regarded as ciphers. Painted images of men whose faces are often

from faces that spanned so many races of emotional emptiness looked back at us and professions of a DMV photo. Seldom had the but had all the impersonality and warmth or the action they were performing. His McCleary's portrait etchings of people from life and often stared at us directly delicate line drawings were also drawn identified, not by name, but by their job That was quite a contrast with Dan

was a cunning mirage about power. wall by two rods of bent metal woman's image was projected on a thin layer of sheer fabric held out from the other hand, were women whose presence Using some low-tech trickery, each ections of female gallery owners, on the Habib Kheradyar's life-size slide pro-

> viewer's own shadow as we tried to see image was frustratingly blotted out by the each almost three-dimensional projected Seemingly approachable but still ghostly,

closely. In the ed, was necesend any pointedly, indisarily, and they representapproach to the them more figures, with all

the mayor's newfound faith currently al tourism, to see directly tance of cultur in the imporgiven that LA It's also hard

career artists a the city's midaimed at giving of the few have been one COLA awards years the the past nine noted that for but it should be Department, Cultural Affairs means to the the change will tell what

people travel to see. for a strong arts community, the kind support that have been proven to make The kind of recognition and financial tional visibility and critical credibility boost of institu

much needed

-Suvan Geer

Angeles Municipal Art Gallery COLA 2004 closed in June at the Los

Suvan Geer is a contributing editor to